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W. C.

IN MEMORIAM

FREDERICK S. WAIT

SOME five years ago, when I became Secretary of the Museum and began to take a more active part in its affairs, a fellow lawyer whom I had long known by appearance, but to whose face I had never before attached a name, called on me and made some suggestions about changes in the arrangement of our pictures which at once attracted me, for they evidenced unexpected knowledge of its collections as well as excellent judgment. This was my first acquaintance with Frederick S. Wait, which later ripened into friendship. Since that time hardly a week has passed in which he has not shown some sign of helpful activity in Museum affairs. He was not a trustee (he presumably would have been had he lived, though he never knew it), he was a member only. But he did more real service than many trustees have done. And he did that service with singular modesty, with no suggestion of recognition and with absolute self-effacement.

He was not rich, but he was a constant giver. No duty rested on him to solicit gifts, but he constantly did it and did it effectively. No one will ever know just how much he aided the Museum. He probably never knew himself, and if he knew he would be the last one to mention it or even think of it.

Some recognition was forced upon him. He was a member of the special committee on the St. Gaudens Memorial exhibition and served as its treasurer. He was a volunteer committee to secure representative works of St. Gaudens for our permanent collection, and what we have is largely due to his efforts.

"I doubt if anyone can correctly estimate the good that he did for the Museum,"

writes a friend who has no official relation to it. "Being much with him, I know that he constantly talked of it and its plans and its needs, not only to people financially able to give it help, but also to anyone else whom he could interest in any phase of its activity. There was a simplicity and an enthusiasm almost boyish, about his manner of conversing on Museum affairs. He never made the slightest pretension of being an art expert, but he worked hard to get the best consensus of opinion on pictures and statuary, the result of which was that his formed judgments were well worth considering. In everything that he did he worked exactly as if the Museum were his own cherished possession, and his care of its welfare was as great as if it had been his own property."

What else was Mr. Wait besides being a friend of the Museum? He was a lawyer, active in his profession—a close student of the law and the author of several well-known text-books. He is the Wait of Sedgwick and Wait on the Trial of Title to Land, and the Wait of Wait on Insolvent Corporations and Wait on Fraudulent Conveyances and Creditors' Bills.

He was an active Committee member in the Bar Association. For fifteen years he has been a Trustee of Barnard College and since 1902 Clerk of the Board. He was one of the Executive Committee of the Free Art League and labored effectively to break down the tariff wall on works of art.

In connection with the breadth of his activities it is interesting to note that he was an Orange County country boy, whose father was interested in agriculture and stock raising. He entered the bar without the advantage of any general university training, being graduated from the Albany Law School in 1874. He was 59 years old at the time of his death on June 30.

In Paris there is an organization known as Les Amis du Louvre. If there had been a corresponding institution in the interest of the Metropolitan Museum here, Frederick S. Wait would have been classed as one of our nearest Friends. May his mantle fall on others no less ardent.

R. W. DE F.